



NEWS

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Air District works with gas station owners to meet vapor recovery requirements

Only six months until April 1, 2009, deadline

SAN FRANCISCO – The Bay Area Air Quality Management District is reminding gas station owners throughout the Bay Area that they must upgrade their vapor recovery systems by April 1 to comply with state regulations.

These Enhanced Vapor Recovery Program requirements apply to approximately 2,000 gasoline dispensing facilities with underground storage tanks in the Bay Area, and are imposed on regions of the state failing to meet federal health standards for ozone air quality.

"We have been working diligently to ensure that gasoline station owners have been informed of this deadline and the new requirements they must meet," said Jack Broadbent, executive officer of the Bay Area Air District. "Compliance with this vapor recovery program is a critical means of safeguarding public health by reducing air pollution in the Bay Area."

Owners of these gas-dispensing facilities must obtain permits, purchase enhanced vapor recovery equipment, and arrange for installation by a certified contractor within the next six months. System upgrades include improved nozzles designed to reduce spillage and vapor processors that cut fugitive gasoline vapor emissions from storage tanks.

Over the past year, the Air District has held vapor recovery meetings for station owners and city and county regulators, made presentations at California Service Station and Auto Repair Association meetings and other venues, and mailed compliance advisory materials, including a guidance checklist, to the region's gas-dispensing facilities. Air District inspectors have discussed the program requirements with facility owners during routine inspections. The Air District has also conducted outreach to local planning, building, fire, and environmental health agencies.

Gasoline vapors are primarily composed of hydrocarbons, which react with other air pollutants to form ozone, the main constituent of smog. Ozone has been the focus of air pollution control regulations for decades as it can lead to asthmatic and other respiratory health effects. The vapor recovery systems will also reduce consumer exposures to benzene, a constituent of gasoline and known carcinogen, while filling their vehicles. The vapor recovery program is designed to capture an additional 10 tons per day of gasoline vapor emissions throughout the state.

The Bay Area Air Quality Management District (www.baaqmd.gov) is the regional agency chartered with protecting air quality in the Bay Area. For more information about Spare the Air, visit www.sparetheair.org.

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